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AMERICAN VAMPIRE

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The
BLACKLIST
Part Five

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AW, WHAT'S
THE MATTER,
PEARLY? NO HUG?
NO KISS FOR
YOUR BEST
FRIEND?

SURE, I'VE GOT
A KISS FOR YOU,
HATTIE. COME
CLOSER.



HA, YOU
STILL GOT IT, KID.
THAT SPIRIT. THAT CAN-
DO THING. I ALWAYS
ADMIRED THAT ABOUT
YOU, BACK WHEN WE
WERE YOUNG.

CHAIN
HER UP,
BOYS.





GET
OFF ME!

BOY, I'VE MISSED YOU, PEARLY.
WE'VE GOT ALOT TO CATCH UP
ON, TOO, YOU AND ME. SO
MUCH HAS HAPPENED SINCE
WE HAD ANY GIRL TIME!

OBVIOUSLY, I RUN WITH A
DIFFERENT CROWD THAN WE
DID BACK WHEN WE WERE KIDS,
DIFFERENT SOCIAL CIRCLES,
AND ALL THAT. BUT I REALLY
BELIEVE WE'LL BE ABLE TO...
RECONNECT, DON'T YOU?
PICK UP RIGHT WHERE
WE LEFT OFF.

SURE, I'M HAPPY TO PICK
UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF.
JUST GIVE ME THAT GOLD
STAR AND I'LL PUSH IT
RIGHT BACK INTO
YOUR FACE.



HEH,
THAT'S RIGHT.
THE GOLD
STAR...

"THAT ALMOST DID THE TRICK,
DIDN'T IT? JUST A COUPLE MINUTES
LONGER AND THE GOLD PLATING
WOULD'VE BURNED RIGHT THROUGH
MY SKULL TO THE FLOOR, AND IT
WOULD HAVE BEEN ROLL CREDITS,
ON HATTIE MARGROVE.

"LUCKILY, OLD B. D. BLOCH,
HERE, WELL, HE SAW
SOMETHING IN ME, PEARLY.
SOMETHING SPECIAL. ISN'T
THAT RIGHT?"

"YES, MY
QUEEN. VERY
MUCH SO."

"YOU'RE SO
SWEET, AND
SO B.D., HE
GOT ME UP
OFF THE
GROUND,
OUT OF MY
FUNK....

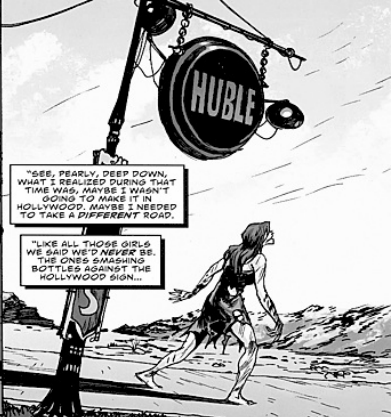
"...AND HE SET ME UP IN A
LITTLE PLACE WE HAD,
SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE
THE LIMELIGHT, PRIVATE.

LET'S TRY ONE
MORE SULFATE, MS.
MARGROVE, AND SEE
IF WE CAN'T FIND
YOUR WEAKNESS...
HOLD STILL!

"HE WAS TOUGH ON ME, BELIEVE ME.
LIKE THE BEST ACTING TEACHERS,
WHO BREAK YOU DOWN, TRY TO FIND
YOUR CHINKS. HE SURE TAUGHT ME
TO HAVE A TOUGH SKIN.



"IN THE END, THOUGH, THE WHOLE THING, WELL, IT JUST WASN'T FOR ME."



"SEE, PEARLY, DEEP DOWN, WHAT I REALIZED DURING THAT TIME WAS, MAYBE I WASN'T GOING TO MAKE IT IN HOLLYWOOD. MAYBE I NEEDED TO TAKE A DIFFERENT ROAD."

"LIKE ALL THOSE GIRLS WE SAID WED NEVER BE. THE ONES SMASHING BOTTLES AGAINST THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN..."



"IT WAS HARD TO ACCEPT I'LL TELL YOU THAT. I IMAGINE IT WAS THE SAME FOR YOU, WHEN YOU LEFT LOS ANGELES, HAPPY AS YOU WERE WITH HENRY."



"STILL, IT'S TOUGH, ISN'T IT? LOOKING HARD AT YOURSELF, INTO YOUR OWN EYES, AND ADMITTING IT."



"ADMITTING YOUR FACE WON'T BE UP THERE ON THE SCREEN, WON'T BE THE ONE PEOPLE KNOW..."



SMASH

PEARLLL!
I'LL KILL YOU!!!!

"...ADMITTING IT'S JUST NOT GOING TO HAPPEN FOR YOU."

"AFTER THAT, THE TRUTH IS, I REALLY JUST WANTED TO FIND YOU, PEARLY. I MISSED MY FRIEND, AFTER ALL.

"I WANTED TO CATCH UP WITH YOU, JUST LIKE WE ARE NOW!

"I LOOKED EVERYWHERE FOR YOU, ALL OVER THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

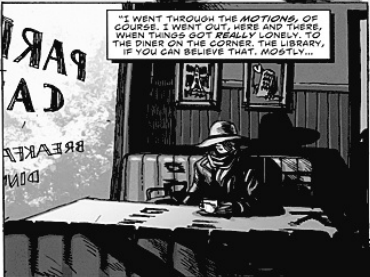


"FROM THERE, HONESTLY, WASN'T SURE WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF ANYMORE, PEARLY.

"I'LL ADMIT, WITHOUT MY DREAMS, WITHOUT MY BEST FRIEND...

"I WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS, OF COURSE. I WENT OUT, HERE AND THERE, WHEN THINGS GOT REALLY LONELY. TO THE DINER ON THE CORNER, THE LIBRARY, IF YOU CAN BELIEVE THAT. MOSTLY...

"...I WENT TO THE MOVIES. IT BECAME MY FAVORITE THING, ALL OVER AGAIN, SITTING THERE IN THE DARK, BEING TRANSPORTED.





"IT WAS
FRUSTRATING,
SURE.



"BUT EVENTUALLY, I
HAD TO ACCEPT THAT
I MIGHT NEVER FIND
MY OLD FRIEND.



"...I FELT...
LOST.



"IT'S FUNNY, YOU
USED TO TALK
ABOUT THAT, WHEN
WE WERE LIVING
TOGETHER. YOU
ALWAYS SAID IT'S
WHAT MADE YOU
WANT TO ACT. TO
BE A PART OF
SOMETHING THAT
COULD "TRANSPORT
PEOPLE."



"MAKE THEM FORGET THE SMALL THINGS AND
BE A PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER, SOMETHING
INSPIRING...I NEVER REALLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT
YOU MEANT UNTIL THAT PERIOD, I THINK, PEARLY.
I ALWAYS JUST WATCHED MOVIES AND PICTURED
MYSELF IN THEM. BUT NOW, I UNDERSTOOD
THE POWER OF MOVING PICTURES."



"AND IN FACT...BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT WAS A MOVIE I SAW DURING THIS TIME THAT CHANGED MY LIFE AGAIN.

"IT WAS ABOUT A YEAR AND A HALF AGO... A POPCORN FICK. A SILLY CHILLER ABOUT A GIRL INJECTED WITH MUTANT SPIDER BLOOD. THE KIND OF THING I COULD IMAGINE YOU AND ME SEEING TOGETHER WITH A BOTTLE OF BIG ELLIE'S WINE AND LAUGHING AT.

"BUT THAT NIGHT, FOR SOME REASON, I SAW SOMETHING IN THE STORY, UP THERE ON THE SCREEN, BECAUSE, SEE, THAT GIRL, THE SPIDER-ONE, SHE GOT DEALT A BAD HAND, NO ARGUMENT THERE.

"BUT SHE MADE IT WORK FOR HER. YES, PEOPLE WERE SCARED OF HER. YES, THEY THOUGHT SHE WAS A MONSTER. BUT SHE TURNED IT AROUND. SHE ACCEPTED IT AND WAS REBORN AS A QUEEN.

"I LEFT THAT THEATER, AND I KNEW JUST WHAT I HAD TO DO."

"TO PUT IT MILDLY, PEARLY, I WAS INSPIRED.

HSSE!

PLEASE...

HEY
THERE,
BOYS.

SLASH



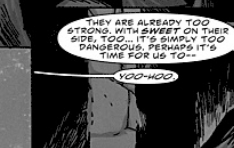
I HAVE TRIED
THERE, SIRE, AT THE
VETERANS HOSPITAL,
BUT THE VASSALS ARE
WATCHING FOR US.
THEY SEEM TO BE
EVERYWHERE.



WATCHING FOR US
EVERYWHERE BUT ALLEYWAYS
AND SEWERS. WHY? BECAUSE
THEY ENJOY KNOWING WE'VE
BEEN FORCED TO SUCH PLACES.
FORCED US TO HUNT THE
CASTOFFS AND RUNTS,
PICKING THEM OFF.



WE SHOULD
FIGHT BACK NOW,
BEFORE IT'S TOO
LATE. THE VASSALS
ARE ONLY GETTING
STRONGER.



THEY ARE ALREADY TOO
STRONG. WITH SWEET ON THEIR
SIDE, TOO... IT'S SIMPLY TOO
DANGEROUS. PERHAPS IT'S
TIME FOR US TO--

YOO-HOO.



IS THIS
A PRIVATE
PARTY?



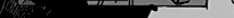
HISSESS!! YOU DARE
COME HERE! YOU
ABOMINATION!



...WE SIT DOWN, AND PUT
OUR GODDAM HEADS
TOGETHER.



NOW, NOW.
FELLAS. CALM DOWN.
I COME TO YOU WITH A
BUSINESS PROPOSITION.
SO HOW ABOUT
INSTEAD OF FIGHTING
THIS TIME...



"AND SO BEGAN
MY NEW
PARTNERSHIP
WITH THE GREAT
B.D. BLOCH..."





"THAT LITTLE
LIST YOU HAD?"

"THOSE NAMES WERE
JUST SACRIFICES
TO KEEP YOU BUSY."



"YOU WORKED YOUR WAY
THROUGH THE SHORT LIST
OF MY MINIONS I LET YOU
FIND. THEY WERE THE
DISTRACTION WHILE I
READIED MY REAL FORCES..."



"FOR WHAT'S
COMING..."



"A FULL-SCALE
INVASION OF THE
VHS HEADQUARTERS."

"A COMPLETE
ERADICATION OF
THE BASE AND THE
VASSALS IN IT."

"JUST LIKE SKINNER
AND I PLANNED--"



"SKINNERT?"

"OF COURSE, SILLY. HE'S
BEEN MY SILENT PARTNER
IN THIS FROM THE START!
I WENT TO HIM WHEN I
WAS FIRST BUILDING THIS
COVEN. I MET WITH HIM
FOR A LITTLE CHAT, SEET

"I TOLD HIM I WAS HOPING TO GROW THIS
COVEN, AND, IF HE HELPED ME, WHEN THIS WAS
ALL OVER, I'D TAKE THAT NASTY LITTLE DEVICE
OUT OF HIS CHEST. FUNNY THING IS, I THINK
HE WOULD HAVE DONE IT JUST FOR FUN.



"WE HAVE A
COMMON
ENEMY, IN
THE VMS..."



"...AND IN
YOU."



OH
MY GOD...
HENRY...

DON'T LOOK SO SAD, PEARLY.
IT'S FUN BEING SINGLE.

ALL RIGHT, I
HAVE TO RUN. DON'T
WANT TO MISS ALL
THE FUN!



I'LL KILL
YOU, HATTIE!
YOU TOUCH HIM
AND I'LL KILL
YOU!

AW, COME
ON NOW!
REMEMBER
WHAT WE USED
TO SAY?

"GIRLFRIENDS TRUMP
BOYFRIENDS." YOU'LL
GET OVER HIM,
PEARLY. I'LL
HELP YOU.



HELL, I'LL
EVEN BRING YOU
SOMETHING TO
REMEMBER
HIM BY...

NOOOO!!



"THEY'RE ALL OVER, SIR!"





"...SO MANY
PLANS."

I'LL KILL
YOU, BLOCH.
I'LL FIND A WAY
OUT OF THIS
AND I'LL MAKE
YOU PAY.

PERHAPS, MY
DEAR, AND WHEN
THAT TIME COMES,
I MAY EVEN WELCOME
IT, GIVEN WHAT MY
GOVEN HAS
BECOME.

BUT TODAY I'M
GOING TO MAKE THE
BEST OF THINGS, AS
YOU AMERICANS LIKE
TO SAY...

...I'M
GOING TO
KEEP ON THE
SUNNY SIDE
AND ENJOY
MYSELF!

HEHE





"...BEFORE SHE
KILLS HENRY!"

THE BLACKLIST

part five of six

SCOTT SNYDER writer **RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE** artist
DAVE MCCAIG colors **JARED K. FLETCHER** letters **ALBUQUERQUE** cover
DUSTIN NGUYEN variant cover **GREGORY LOCKARD** asst. editor **MARK DOYLE** editor
AMERICAN VAMPIRE created by **SCOTT SNYDER & RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE**

HEY THERE,
LOVERBOY.

To be
Continued...

[Signature] 2012

ON THE

LEDGE



LAUREN BEUKES is an author, scriptwriter and journalist based out of Cape Town, South Africa. Her novel *Zoo City* won the 2010 Arthur C. Clarke Award and the Kitschies Red Tentacle. She made her comics debut in Vertigo's *STRANGE ADVENTURES*.

When Bill Willingham asked me to pitch a **FAIREST** storyarc on **FABLES'** original bad hair day girl, I knew that Rapunzel was going to break all the rules, chafing under the strictest restrictions of all the fairy tale exiles living in secret in New York City.

She has to, you see, because that dead dog known as the past has come to sniff her out. And sometimes the only way to come to terms with your dark history is to turn and face it head-on.

Of course, it's not a literal dog. It's a snowstorm of origami cranes that crashes through her window bearing a message that will force Rapunzel to defy Snow White and Bigby, make a devil's bargain with the wicked witch of the 13th floor, Frau Totenkinder, and go on the run to Tokyo with a dodgy choice of companions.

I was interested in what terrible secrets Rapunzel doesn't confide in her hairdresser, Joel Crow, why we haven't seen any Eastern-inspired Fables, even during the war, and why hair figures so prominently in so many Japanese ghost stories.

I took inspiration from a range of sources from *Tekkinkreet* to *The Pillow Book*, Kurosawa, Miyazaki, Miike and the Murakamis-three (Haruki, Ryu and Takashi), *The Tale of Genji*, *Tokyo Vice* and *The Hundred Demons Night Parade*. I researched fairy tales and history and true crime and listened to Japanese punk-pop and drank Japanese whisky and let my hair grow out. Just to get into character.

Artist Inaki Miranda was happy because he got to draw everything from seedy pachinko parlors and karaoke clubs in neon Shibuya to the lavishly corrupt celestial palace of the Hidden Kingdom, as well as Harajuku girls, weird monsters, love, sex, magic, violence, and some very cool hairstyles. His artwork made the story deeper and richer and darker. His panels are breathtakingly beautiful. Or utterly horrifying. Or perfectly, subtly nuanced. On some pages all at the same time.

FAIREST: THE HIDDEN KINGDOM is about a doomed love affair (or two), the compromises we make and the price of revenge, with shape-shifting yokai, yakuza, hungry ghosts and that amazingly Japanese clash of modernity and tradition where skyscrapers and shrines to the spirits of lost children can coexist on the same street corner. It all begins with **FAIREST #8** this October. I think you'll like it.

Lauren Beukes

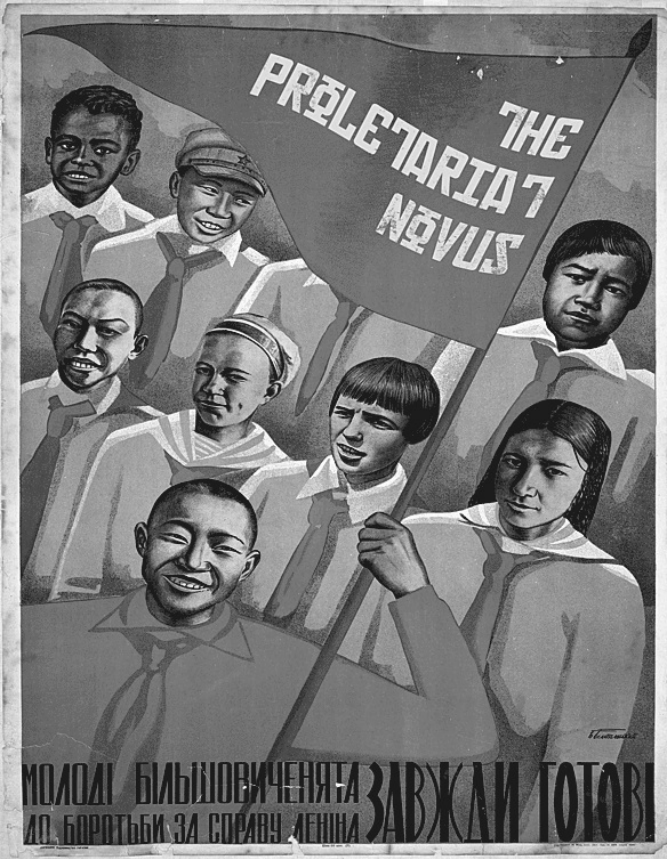
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THE
PROLETARIAT
NOVUS

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ДО БОРЬБИ ЗА СПРАВУ ЛЕНИНА